

2022 PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY GRANT REPORT (PLGR)

LIBRARY NAME

Houston Public Library

CHECKLIST

For the PLGR to be considered complete, please ensure you have provided information for each of the following sections. Suggested word counts have been included for each question, but feel free to include more or less text as needed – text boxes will expand as you type. Click on a title in the list below to jump to that section of the document.

- [1. INTRODUCTION - LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY PROFILE](#)
- [2. MAJOR PROJECTS/PROGRAMS](#)
- [3. CHALLENGES](#)
- [4. COVID-19 RELIEF & RECOVERY – 2022 PROGRESS REPORT](#)
- [5. BOARD APPROVAL](#)

INTRODUCTION - LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY PROFILE

Provide a brief description of the community and library, focusing on what has changed in the past year. If provincial funding is primarily used to support your library's core operations, please include a general describe where it is applied (staffing, utilities, collections, etc.).

Houston, a small town of about 3000 residents, is located within Area G of the Regional District of Bulkley Nechako. The Houston Public Library was opened in the 1920s and was maintained by volunteers until it was incorporated as the Houston Public Library Association under the Library Act on January 28, 1965. At that point the Association began receiving provincial and municipal funding. Over the years HPL has continued to grow into an invaluable part of the community.

Houston is a hub for the Coastal Gaslink Pipeline. Over the past year, we have welcomed many new faces into the community. The increased number of people in the community has impacted the rental market making it hard for lower income families to find safe and clean accommodations. We have added staff to accommodate the busier environment and strive to provide the entire community with excellent library services.

In addition to our physical collection of books and DVDs, the library offers, ebooks and eaudiobooks, 8 public access computers, free Wi-Fi, printing, faxing, photocopying, numerous programs and events, meeting room rentals, and much more.

Our Provincial funding goes to Interlibrary Loan services, programming, and utilities.

2. FEATURED PROJECTS/PROGRAMS

Please describe any featured projects/programs the library has delivered in the past year. To report on multiple projects/programs, “copy” the blank table below and insert additional tables as needed using the

“paste” function. Use one table per project/program. You do not need to report on every project/program, only highlights/notable examples.

Project/Program Name
Storytime Craft Kits
Provide a brief description. Please include details such as any partnerships or resources leveraged to accomplish this project/program.
Our Programmer Coordinator selects children's books and creates themed craft kits relating to events or subjects in the book. Patrons receive the kit when checking out the book. Kits come with all supplies required to complete the craft including crayons, paints, and markers. There are no partnerships for this project.
How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals?
This project supports the library's strategic goal #2: Increase community engagement and expand user base. Many patrons with young children were unable/unwilling to attend an in person Story Time. Some do not have a way to get into the library often and some are still cautious about Covid and other airborne illnesses. We decided to create the craft kits so those patrons would not have to miss out on the opportunity to complete a Story Time craft. These kits are also great for families that may not have the resources at home to craft with their children.
How does this project/program support the <u>B.C.'s strategic goal(s) for public library service from the strategic plan, which include:</u>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Improving Access2. Building Capacity3. Advancing Citizen Engagement4. Enhancing Governance
This project supports the province's strategic goal #1: Improving access. The project improves access by providing the patrons with the resources to do programming at home on their own time. Participants are not required to come to the library at a certain time to attend the program in person. This improves access for patrons.

What are the key outcomes of this project/program?

Immediate outcomes:

Storytime Kits are available for those who are unable or unwilling to attend in person Story Time events.

Intermediate outcomes:

Patrons who may not have a way to get to the library at a certain time are not completely missing out on programming.

Patrons will have more time to complete the project as they will not be limited to event times.

Ultimate outcomes:

This project aligns with provincial and library goals

Did provincial grants enable this project/program? If so, how?

Yes, we set a portion of our provincial funding aside for programming.

Project/Program Name

Internet Speed Upgrade

Provide a brief description. Please include details such as any partnerships or resources leveraged to accomplish this project/program.

Our previous internet speed was 125 MBPS. For the majority of the time we found this to be sufficient. However, we started having patrons bring in computers and gaming systems to download updates and games. This would cause the public network to lag for other patrons using our computers or laptops on the Wi-Fi. We were able to upgrade the service to 500 MBPS to speed up downloads for patrons bringing in devices and to avoid delays for others using the service.

How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals?

This project supports goal #2: Increase community engagement and expand user base.

Having faster internet allows those in surrounding areas that do not have internet access, or have slow internet, to come use ours and not have the speed impacted by other users. Unfortunately, 1 block away from us is a neighbourhood that does not have the option for fiber-optic internet. Many of them have expressed how grateful they are that they can bring computers and devices down and play online games without experiencing the game lagging.

How does this project/program support the B.C.'s strategic goal(s) for public library service from the strategic plan, which include:

1. Improving Access

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Building Capacity 3. Advancing Citizen Engagement 4. Enhancing Governance |
|--|

This project supports goal # 1: Improving access

This project increases access to the internet for many different patrons. People without access to fast internet can come here to work, play games, or anything else they might require.

What are the key outcomes of this project/program?

Immediate Outcomes:

Faster internet is available to everyone. Wi-Fi access stays on constantly

Intermediate Outcomes:

Patrons who are unable to access high speed internet at home can use the library's for free.

Patrons with Wi-Fi devices are not limited to opening hours.

Ultimate Outcomes:

Aligns with provincial and library goals.

Did provincial grants enable this project/program? If so, how?

Yes, a portion of the operating grant goes towards utilities.

Project/Program Name

Free Exam Invigilation

Provide a brief description. Please include details such as any partnerships or resources leveraged to accomplish this project/program.

We have always offered free exam invigilation for patrons with a library account. However, during Covid, there were times when members of the surrounding communities were unable to get exam invigilation in their own communities. Rather than require these patrons pay \$30 on top of travelling for the exam, we decided to offer free invigilation services to everyone. People were incredibly grateful and we are going to continue this free service throughout 2023.

How does this project/program support the library's strategic goals?

This project supports library goal #2: Increase community engagement and enhance space.

By offering free exam supervision to anyone regardless of whether or not they are a member, we are engaging members of the public that may not know what the library has to offer. There are often times someone will sign up for a card just because they came into the library this one time to write an exam. It provides us with an opportunity to promote the library to people who might not otherwise come in.

How does this project/program support the B.C.'s strategic goal(s) for public library service from the strategic plan, which include:

1. Improving Access
2. Building Capacity
3. Advancing Citizen Engagement
4. Enhancing Governance

This project supports goal #1: Improving access

By eliminating the mandatory \$30 fee for non-members, we are making things easier for anyone who needs to take an exam.

What are the key outcomes of this project/program?**Immediate Outcomes:**

Everyone is offered free exam supervision.

Intermediate Outcomes:

Relieves the burden off people who may be impacted by the \$30. Particularly those who also have to travel to the library for the exam.

Brings new people into the library who may have used another service to supervise.

Ultimate Outcomes:

Aligns with provincial strategy for improving access.

Did provincial grants enable this project/program? If so, how?

Yes. Exam invigilation is considered a program and programs are covered under our provincial funding.

3. CHALLENGES

The following topics have been identified as recurring themes in previous years' PLGRs. The intent of this section is to collect detailed information in a structured, consistent format.

Please select the most significant challenges that the library has faced in the past year that you wish to comment on. Leave any other listed topics blank. Use the 'Other' row to include any ongoing or past challenges that not included in this list. If you have more than one 'Other' item to add, please insert additional rows into the table.

Challenge	Briefly describe how this challenge has impacted the library/community, and what steps the library took to address it in 2022. Please specify if any provincial funding was used, e.g., annual library funding, the technology grant, other non-PLB provincial grants (up to 250 words per topic).
COVID-19 (e.g., safety protocols, proof of vaccination)	
Emergency response (e.g., fires, floods, extreme weather)	With increasingly warmer weather in our area, it became apparent there is now a need for cooling centres during heat waves. In March 2022, we had 2 new furnaces with air conditioning installed in the library with funding from the District of Houston. The library will open for additional hours as needed in the summer months during heat waves. This may pose a funding issue with the additional cost of staff and utilities.
Financial pressure (e.g., rising costs, reduced revenues)	Our collections budget has not increased since 2017. With the rising costs of materials each year, we are able to buy less and less physical material for our library. We were very fortunate to have one patron generously donate \$5000 towards the youth collection.
Staffing (e.g., recruitment and retention, mental health, and wellness)	Many businesses in Houston have been struggling with finding staff. The library was also affected by this. It took several months for us to fill a vacant position. Unfortunately, we are not able to offer competitive wages and the position is only part-time. This makes it a tough one to fill.
Disappearing services in the community (e.g., government, banking, health)	
Connectivity (e.g., low bandwidth, lack of home internet in the community)	

Aging/damaged facilities (e.g., need for repairs, renovations, upgrades/expansions)	
Community access to the library (e.g., geographic isolation, lack of local public transit, building accessibility)	
Vulnerable communities (e.g., people experiencing homelessness, addiction, mental health crisis)	
Other (please specify)	

4. COVID-19 RELIEF & RECOVERY GRANT – 2022 PROGRESS REPORT

Summary and Overview

Please provide an executive summary (overview summary) on the library's use of the COVID-19 Relief and Recovery Grants. The purpose of this section is not to duplicate the individual projects details, instead provide a short analysis and summary of your overall approach and progress. Please limit to 2 paragraphs and feel free to use bullet points.

Summary and Overview
<p>Before we allocated the funding, we asked the community how they wanted to see the money spent. We got a few really good suggestions, including at least 1 we would not have thought of. Suggestions included Take home craft kits, self-checkout, more graphic novels, and an automatic bathroom door. All suggestions were great and we decided to make sure we incorporated many of those into the plan.</p> <p>Things are progressing well. 3 of 8 projects have been completed. 2 should be completed in the next 2 weeks. We hope to have the remaining projects completed by the end of June 2023.</p>

	Grant budget	Reallocated budget
COVID-19 Relief & Recovery Grant Amount	22625.46	25416.03
Emergency Planning & Preparedness Grant Amount	7541.82	4751.25
Total Grant Amount	30167.28	30167.28

Project Progress Report

Please use this section for:

1. Report progress on projects included interim report **and/ or**
2. New projects developed since interim report (copy and paste tables as needed)

Project/Program/Activity	Self-checkout stations
Rationale	Community requested
Area of Need	Covid-19 recovery
Action/Output/Deliverable	2 new self-checkout stations
Outcome/Impact	Patrons who choose, will be able to check out their own items with 2 new self-checkout stations. We have patrons who are continuing to social distance and would prefer to handle their own transactions. This will also help reduce wait times when the front desk is busy.
Metrics	2 new self-checkout machines including iPads
Collaborative Links (if applicable)	N/A
Expenditure	\$6000
Detailed status update since the interim report (e.g., complete, in progress, pending, deferred, etc.).	This project is in progress. We have the machines and the details all setup. We are just waiting on iPads. They should be ready for the public in the next week or 2.
Comments (optional)	

Project/Program/Activity	New public computers and monitors
Rationale	Updating old and slow equipment
Area of Need	Covid-19 recovery
Action/Output/Deliverable	Replace 2 older, slower public computers
Outcome/Impact	Reduced wait times for those needing to use computers. New computers will not crash randomly resulting in data loss.
Metrics	2 new public computers
Collaborative Links (if applicable)	Our IT support person donated 1 hour of labour
Expenditure	\$3240.16
Detailed status update since the interim report (e.g., complete, in progress, pending, deferred, etc.).	Completed May 2022
Comments (optional)	

Project/Program/Activity	2 new staff computers
Rationale	Old staff computers result in delays getting ILLs and other tasks completed in a timely manner.
Area of Need	Covid-19 recovery
Action/Output/Deliverable	Replace 2 older staff computers
Outcome/Impact	Staff will have new, faster computers resulting in reduced wait times for patrons.
Metrics	2 new staff computers and monitors
Collaborative Links (if applicable)	N/A
Expenditure	\$3250
Detailed status update since the interim report (e.g., complete, in progress, pending, deferred, etc.).	This project has been delayed until spring 2023
Comments (optional)	

Project/Program/Activity	New automatic bathroom door for accessibility
Rationale	Patron requested and necessary to become a fully accessible building.
Area of Need	Covid-19 recovery
Action/Output/Deliverable	Install a new automatic bathroom door.
Outcome/Impact	An automatic bathroom door will make access easier for those with disabilities, stroller, multiple children, etc.
Metrics	1 new door with automatic feature
Collaborative Links (if applicable)	N/A
Expenditure	\$5000
Detailed status update since the interim report (e.g., complete, in progress, pending, deferred, etc.).	Delayed until spring 2023. The company reports parts are currently hard to come by. Better off to wait.
Comments (optional)	Please note: This expenditure is an estimate from the contractor, not an official quote.

Project/Program/Activity	Offering both in-house and take-home craft kits
Rationale	Requested by patrons
Area of Need	Covid-19 Recovery
Action/Output/Deliverable	Create take home craft packages that match the in-house programs when possible for patrons who prefer to do the activity at home.
Outcome/Impact	Library programs will be more accessible to those patrons who choose to continue social distancing.
Metrics	A total of 20-25 projects and take home kits for approximately 400-500 people.
Collaborative Links (if applicable)	N/A
Expenditure	\$5736.27 for supplies needed for in-house and take-home craft kits.

Detailed status update since the interim report (e.g., complete, in progress, pending, deferred, etc.).	In progress Money should be used by June 2023
Comments (optional)	Originally we planned to use some of the \$5000 for wages. That plan has changed. The money will only be spent on supplies. Note: We were able to save significantly on another project so increased this one by \$736.27

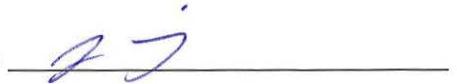
Project/Program/Activity	New shelving
Rationale	Lack of space for graphic novel section
Area of Need	Covid-19 recovery
Action/Output/Deliverable	Have a local contractor build a wooden, wall mounting shelf.
Outcome/Impact	Increase the graphic novel section
Metrics	Wall mounting shelf
Collaborative Links (if applicable)	N/A
Expenditure	\$747
Detailed status update since the interim report (e.g., complete, in progress, pending, deferred, etc.).	This project will be completed by next week. The shelf is finished and we are just waiting for the contractor to deliver and install.
Comments (optional)	This project was originally going to use nearly \$3000 to purchase metal shelving. Staff suggested wooden shelving would look better in the space so we decided to hire someone local to build it.

Project/Program/Activity	*New Project* 8 new office chairs for public computers
Rationale	Requested by staff and the public
Area of Need	Covid-19 recovery
Action/Output/Deliverable	Purchase 8 new pleather office chairs which will be easier to keep clean than fabric ones.
Outcome/Impact	Pleather can be wiped down at the end of each shift to ensure the chairs are free of odour and debris.
Metrics	8 new office chairs for public computers
Collaborative Links (if applicable)	N/A
Expenditure	\$1415.60
Detailed status update since the interim report (e.g., complete, in progress, pending, deferred, etc.).	This project was completed January 2023.
Comments (optional)	This project is new and was possible due to significant savings on another project.

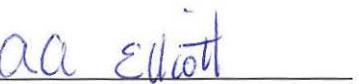
Project/Program/Activity	Fencing around heat pumps
Rationale	To protect equipment from damage
Area of Need	Emergency planning and preparedness
Action/Output/Deliverable	Have a contractor install a 6 foot chain link fence around the units.
Outcome/Impact	The library is our community cooling centre and the heat pumps need to be protected to keep them operational.
Metrics	Fencing to protect heat pumps
Collaborative Links (if applicable)	N/A
Expenditure	4751.25 for labour and equipment
Detailed status update since the interim report (e.g., complete, in progress, pending, deferred, etc.).	This project was completed in October 2022
Comments (optional)	

5. BOARD APPROVAL

Electronic signatures are acceptable where physical signatures are not feasible.

Library Director Signature: 

Date: Feb 28/2023

Board Chair Signature: 

Date: Feb 28 2023